

Listing of claims:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product that is associated with a
2 number of configurable features, wherein the method allows a customer to
3 dynamically interact with a seller of the product over the Internet during the
4 configuration, the method comprising:
5 receiving into a configuration application of the seller a selected feature, from the
6 customer;
7 communicating from the seller to a manufacturer the selected feature;
8 receiving from the manufacturer an automated response including an availability
9 date that corresponds to the selected feature; and
10 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect that selected feature.

1 2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 repeating the steps of receiving into a configuration application a selected feature,
3 communicating to a manufacturer the selected feature, receiving from the
4 manufacturer an automated response including an availability date, and
5 updating a number of times until the configuration is complete thereby
6 yielding a completed bill of materials.

1 3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving from the
2 manufacturer an automated response including an availability date is preceded by
3 the step of:
4 communicating the selected feature to a vendor.

5

6 4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, the method further comprising:
7 in response to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
8 communicating a customer specified availability date to at least one of the
9 seller and manufacturer.

1 5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the availability date received
2 from the manufacturer is in response to a customer specified availability date
3 communicated to at least one of the seller and manufacturer.

1 6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the availability date received
2 from the manufacturer is in response to a customer specified price communicated
3 to at least one of the seller and manufacturer.

1 7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 deriving, from the in-process bill of materials, an in-process manufacturing bill of
3 materials that reflects the received availability date that corresponds to the
4 selected feature.

1 8. (Original) The method of claim 1, the method further comprising:
2 receiving a price that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, the method further comprising:

2 in response to the received price being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer specified price to at least one of the seller and
4 manufacturer.

1 10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the price received is in
2 response to a customer specified availability date communicated to at least one of
3 the seller and manufacturer.

1 11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the price received is in
2 response to a customer specified price communicated to at least one of the seller
3 and manufacturer.

1 12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein a relationship between the
2 customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and
3 a resource planning side associated with the seller, and that configuration side-
4 resource planning side relationship is respectively one of a consumer-seller
5 relationship, a seller-manufacturer relationship and a manufacturer-vendor
6 relationship.

1 13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, deriving an in-process pricing bill of materials from the
4 in-process bill of materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials
5 reflects the price of the selected feature; and

6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, deriving the in-process pricing bill of materials from an in-
8 process manufacturing bill of materials that is derived from the in-process
9 bill of materials and reflects the received availability date of the selected
10 feature.

1 14. (Currently Amended) A system for configuring a product that is associated with a
2 number of configurable features, wherein the system allows a customer to interact
3 with a supplier of the product over the Internet during the configuration, the
4 system comprising:
5 a configuration application of a supplier for receiving a product feature selected
6 by the customer, and for validating a number of constraints associated
7 with that product feature;
8 a communication module coupled to the configuration application for
9 communicating the selected product feature to the supplier, and for
10 communicating over the Internet an availability date of that product
11 feature from the supplier to the configuration application; and
12 a first storage area coupled to one of the configuration application and the
13 communication module for storing an in-process bill of materials that
14 reflects the product feature selected by the customer.

1 15. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein after the customer has completed the
2 configuration, the in-process bill of materials represents a completed bill of
3 materials.

1 16. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein in response to the availability date being
2 unsatisfactory to the customer, the communication module communicates a
3 customer specified availability date to the supplier.

1 17. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the availability date is in response to a
2 customer specified availability date communicated to the supplier by the
3 communication module.

1 18. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the availability date is in response to a
2 customer specified price communicated to the supplier by the communication
3 module

1 19. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein an in-process manufacturing bill of
2 materials is derived from the in-process bill of materials, and reflects the
3 availability date of the selected product feature.

1 20. (Original) The system of claim 14, further comprising:
2 a second storage area coupled to one of the configuration application and the
3 communication module for storing an in-process manufacturing bill of
4 materials that reflects the availability date of the selected product feature;
5 and
6 a third storage area coupled to one of the configuration application and the
7 communication module for storing an in-process pricing bill of materials
8 that reflects a price of the selected product feature.

1 21. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the communication module is also for
2 communicating a price of the selected product feature from the supplier to the
3 configuration application.

1 22. (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the communication module comprises:
2 an availability date communication module for communicating the availability
3 date of the selected product feature from the supplier to the configuration
4 application; and
5 a price communication module for communicating the price of the selected
6 product feature to the configuration application.

1 23. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein a relationship between the customer and
2 the supplier has a configuration side associated with the customer, and a resource
3 planning side associated with the supplier, and that configuration side-resource
4 planning side relationship is respectively one of a consumer-seller relationship, a
5 seller-manufacturer relationship and a manufacturer-vendor relationship.

1 24. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein:
2 in response to the price of the selected product feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, an in-process pricing bill of materials is derived from
4 the in-process bill of materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of
5 materials reflects the price of the selected feature; and
6 in response to the price of the selected product feature being determined on the
7 resource planning side, the in-process pricing bill of materials is derived

8 from an in-process manufacturing bill of materials that is derived from the
9 in-process bill of materials and reflects the received availability date of the
10 selected feature.

1 25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, further comprising:
2 a user interface coupled to the configuration application for allowing the customer
3 to interact with the system..

1 26. (Original) The system of claim 14, further comprising:
2 an inventory library coupled to the configuration application for providing the
3 customer a number of product features that can be selected to configure
4 the product.

1 27. (Previously Presented) A method for configuring a product that is associated with a
2 number of configurable features, wherein the method allows a customer to
3 dynamically interact with a supplier of the product over the Internet during the
4 configuration, the method comprising:
5 communicating a customer selected product feature to the supplier;
6 receiving from the supplier an availability date that corresponds to that selected
7 product feature;
8 in response to the availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
9 communicating a customer specified availability date to the supplier; and
10 receiving from the supplier an automated response including an accommodation
11 based on the customer specified availability date.

1 28. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising:

2 updating a bill of materials to reflect the accommodation received from the
3 supplier.

1 29. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the accommodation is one of an

2 availability date that satisfies the customer specified availability date, and a
3 reduced price.

1 30. (Currently Amended) A process for configuring a product that is associated with a

2 number of configurable features, wherein the customer dynamically interacts with
3 a seller of the product over the Internet in order to define a set of sales parameters
4 that includes an availability date of at least one of the configurable features, the
5 method comprising:

6 responsive to the customer selecting a feature of the product, receiving at the
7 seller~~from a manufacturer~~ an automated response from a manufacturer, the
8 automated response including an availability date that corresponds to that
9 selected feature;

10 responsive to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
11 communicating a customer specified availability date to the manufacturer;
12 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect that selected feature; and
13 in response to the customer being satisfied with the sales parameters, submitting a
14 completed bill of materials to the manufacturer.

1 31. (Previously Presented) A computer program product, stored on a computer readable
2 medium, for configuring a product that is associated with a number of
3 configurable features, wherein in response to the computer program product being
4 executed by a processor, the processor performs the steps of:
5 receiving from a supplier over the Internet an availability date that corresponds to
6 a product feature selected by a customer;
7 in response to the availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
8 communicating over the Internet a customer specified availability date to
9 the supplier; and
10 receiving from the supplier over the Internet an automated response including an
11 accommodation based on the customer specified availability date..

1 32. (Original) The computer program product of claim 31, further comprising:
2 updating a bill of materials to reflect the accommodation received from the
3 supplier.

1 33. (Previously Presented) A computer program product, stored on a computer readable
2 medium, for configuring a product that is associated with a number of
3 configurable features, wherein in response to the computer program product being
4 executed by a processor, the processor performs the steps of:
5 responsive to a customer selecting a feature of the product, receiving from a
6 manufacturer over the Internet an automated response including an
7 availability date that corresponds to that selected feature;

8 responsive to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
9 communicating a customer specified availability date to the manufacturer;
10 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect that selected feature; and
11 in response to the customer being satisfied with a set of sales parameters
12 including the availability date of the selected feature, submitting a
13 completed bill of materials to the manufacturer over the Internet.

1 34. (Previously Presented) A system for configuring a product that is associated with a
2 number of configurable features, wherein the system allows a customer to interact
3 with a supplier of the product over the Internet during the configuration, the
4 system comprising:
5 configuration application means for receiving a product feature selected by the
6 customer, and for validating a number of constraints associated with that
7 product feature;
8 communication module means coupled to the configuration application means for
9 communicating the selected product feature to the supplier, and for
10 communicating over the Internet an availability date of that product
11 feature from the supplier to the configuration application means; and
12 storage area means coupled to one of the configuration application means and the
13 communication module means for storing an in-process bill of materials
14 that reflects the product feature selected by the user.

1 35. (Previously Presented) A method for configuring a product that is associated with a
2 number of configurable features, wherein the method allows a customer to

3 dynamically interact with a seller of the product over the Internet during the
4 configuration, the method comprising:
5 receiving into a configuration application of the seller a selected feature;
6 communicating to a manufacturer the selected feature;
7 receiving over the Internet an automated response including an availability date
8 that corresponds to the selected feature from the manufacturer; and
9 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect that selected feature;
10 wherein the availability date received from the manufacturer over the Internet is
11 provided by a supply chain planning (SCP) system.

1 36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the availability date received
2 from the manufacturer over the Internet is provided by an enterprise resource
3 planning (ERP) system.

1 37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the step of communicating a
2 customer specified availability date to the manufacturer is followed by receiving
3 from the manufacturer an automated response including an accommodation in
4 response to the customer specified availability date.

1 38. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product incorporating at
2 least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method ~~for each selectable~~
3 ~~feature~~ comprising:
4 (a) receiving at a seller a feature selection by the customer;
5 (b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect
6 constraints imposed by the received selection;

- 7 (c) providing the received selection to a supplier;
- 8 (d) receiving information from the supplier comprising at least one of availability
- 9 date and price for the received selection;
- 10 (e) where customer desires are not satisfied, providing at least one of a customer
- 11 desired availability date and a customer desired price for the selection;
- 12 (f) displaying accommodation data from the supplier corresponding to the
- 13 customer desires; and
- 14 (g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
- 15 materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the selection.

- 1 39. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product incorporating at
- 2 least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method ~~for each selectable~~
- 3 ~~feature~~ comprising:
- 4 (a) receiving a feature selection at a seller;
 - 5 (b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect
 - 6 constraints imposed by the received selection;
 - 7 (c) providing the received selection to a supplier;
 - 8 (d) receiving information from the supplier comprising at least one of availability
 - 9 date and price for the received selection;
 - 10 (e) where customer desires are not satisfied, providing at least one of a customer
 - 11 desired availability date and a customer desired price for the selection;
 - 12 (f) ~~displaying~~ providing accommodation data from the supplier, the
 - 13 accommodation data ~~corresponding responsive~~ to the at least one of the

14 | customer desired availability date and the customer desired price for the
15 | selection~~customer desires~~; and
16 | (g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
17 | materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the received
18 | selection;
19 | wherein the customer desires comprise ~~at least one of either~~ at least one of a
20 | plurality of availability dates or at least one of a plurality of prices, for the
21 | selected feature.

1 | 40. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product incorporating at
2 | least one feature to be selected by a customer, the method ~~for each selectable~~
3 | ~~feature comprising~~:
4 | (a) receiving a feature selection at a seller;
5 | (b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect
6 | constraints imposed by the selection;
7 | (c) providing the received selection to a supplier;
8 | (d) receiving information from the supplier, the information comprising a
9 | plurality of availability dates and a plurality of prices for the ~~at least one of~~
10 | ~~availability date and price for the~~ received selection;
11 | (e) where customer desires are not satisfied, providing at least one of a customer
12 | desired availability date and a customer desired price for the received
13 | selection;
14 | (f) providing to the customer ~~displaying~~ accommodation data from the supplier,
15 | the accommodation data responsive to the at least one of the customer

16 desired availability date and the customer desired price for the selection
17 ~~corresponding to the customer desires; and~~
18 (g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
19 materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the received
20 selection;
21 ~~wherein the step (d) of receiving information on the selection from the supplier~~
22 ~~further comprises receiving from the supplier a plurality of availability~~
23 ~~dates and a plurality of prices for the selected feature.~~

1 41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the pricing bill of materials
2 is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the pricing bill of materials
2 is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the step (g) of updating at
2 least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the
4 supplier.

1 44. (Currently Amended) A system for selling a configurable product incorporating at
2 least one feature to be selected by a customer, the system comprising:
3 an inventory library coupled to a configuration engine for providing a catalog of
4 selectable features that correspond to a particular configurable product;

5 a user interface coupled to the configuration engine using the Internet, the user
6 interface for displaying selectable features and for receiving customer
7 desires; and
8 a supplier system coupled to the configuration engine using the Internet, the
9 supplier system for providing at least one of availability information and
10 price information to at least one of the user interface, the configuration
11 engine, and the inventory library, and for providing accommodation data
12 to the configuration engine in automated response to customer desires
13 communicated to the supplier system, ~~and the~~ the configuration engine for
14 validating the customer desires against constraints associated with the
15 selectable features, for determining whether the at least one of availability
16 information and price information meet customer desires, and for
17 communicating specific customer desires to the supplier system.

1 45. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the user interface,
2 configuration engine, and supplier system are remotely located with respect to
3 each other.

1 46. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the configuration engine
2 further comprises:
3 a configuration application,
4 a price communication module,
5 an availability communication module, and
6 means for creating and updating at least one of a configuration bill of materials, a

7 manufacturing bill of materials, and a pricing bill of materials.

1 47. (Currently Amended) A method of selling from a supplier a product, the product
2 including that consists of at least one selectable feature to be chosen by a
3 customer, the method comprising:
4 displaying providing to a customer a selectable feature, and at least one of price
5 and availability date of the selectable feature;
6 conveying to the supplier at least one of a customer desired availability date and
7 a customer desired price; and
8 supplying an automated response to a seller, the automated response including an
9 accommodation from the supplier based on the at least one of a customer
10 desired availability date and a customer desired price.

1 48. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 47, wherein the customer is chosen from
2 one of the set of retailer and wholesaler and manufacturer and distributor of the
3 product.

1 49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, wherein the supplier is chosen from
2 one of the set of retailer and wholesaler and manufacturer and distributor and
3 vendor.

1 50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising: repeating the
2 steps of receiving into a configuration application a selected feature,
3 communicating to a manufacturer the selected feature, receiving from the
4 manufacturer an automated response including an availability date, and updating a

5 number of times until the configuration is complete thereby yielding a completed
6 bill of materials.

1 51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the step of receiving from
2 the manufacturer an automated response including an availability date is preceded
3 by the step of: communicating the selected feature to a vendor.

1 52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, the method further comprising: in
2 response to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer specified availability date to at least one of the seller
4 and manufacturer.

1 53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date received
2 from the manufacturer is in response to a customer specified availability date
3 communicated to at least one of the seller and manufacturer.

1 54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date received
2 from the manufacturer is in response to a customer specified price communicated
3 to at least one of the seller and manufacturer.

1 55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising: deriving, from
2 the in-process bill of materials, an in-process manufacturing bill of materials that
3 reflects the received availability date that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, the method further comprising:
2 receiving a price that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, the method further comprising: in
2 response to the received price being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer specified price to at least one of the seller and
4 manufacturer.

1 58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the price received is in
2 response to a customer specified availability date communicated to at least one of
3 the seller and manufacturer.

1 59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the price received is in
2 response to a customer specified price communicated to at least one of the seller
3 and manufacturer.

1 60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein a relationship between the
2 customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and
3 a resource planning side associated with the seller, and that configuration side-
4 resource planning side relationship is respectively one of a consumer-seller
5 relationship, a seller-manufacturer relationship and a manufacturer-vendor
6 relationship.

1 61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, deriving an in-process pricing bill of materials from the

4 in-process bill of materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials
5 reflects the price of the selected feature; and
6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, deriving the in-process pricing bill of materials from an in-
8 process manufacturing bill of materials that is derived from the in-process
9 bill of materials and reflects the received availability date of the selected
10 feature.

1 62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the pricing bill of materials
2 is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the pricing bill of materials
2 is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the step (g) of updating at
2 least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the
4 supplier.

1 65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the pricing bill of materials
2 is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the pricing bill of materials
2 is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40, wherein the step (g) of updating at
2 least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the
4 supplier.

1 68. (New) A method for configuring a product having at least one selectable feature, the
2 method comprising:
3 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product at a
4 configuration application of a seller of the product;
5 communicating the received selection from the configuration application to a
6 supplier system;
7 receiving from the supplier system an automated response to the communicated
8 received selection, the automated response including an availability date
9 of the selected feature;
10 updating an in-process bill of materials based upon the availability date of the
11 selected feature; and
12 using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine a first availability date
13 of the product, the first availability date of the product being based on at
14 least the availability date of the selected feature; and
15 providing the first availability date of the product to the customer.

1 69. (New) The method of claim 68, wherein the automated response is generated by a
2 manufacturer of the selected feature.

1 70. (New) The method of claim 68, wherein the automated response includes a plurality
2 of availability dates, each of the plurality of availability dates associated with a
3 different price of the selected feature.

1 71. (New) The method of claim 68, further including
2 providing to the customer a determined second availability date of the
3 product,
4 providing to the customer a first product price associated with the first
5 availability date of the product, and
6 providing to the customer a second product price associated with the
7 second availability date of the product,
8 wherein the automated response further includes a plurality of availability
9 dates associated with the selected feature, each of the plurality of
10 availability dates associated with a different price of the selected
11 feature.

1 72. (New) The method of claim 68, wherein the first availability date of the product,
2 determined using the updated in-process bill of materials, is further based on an
3 availability date of another selectable feature.

1 73. (New) The method of claim 68, further including receiving, at the configuration
2 application, a feature price that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 74. (New) The method of claim 73, further including updating a product price responsive
2 to the received feature price, and providing the updated product price to the
3 customer.

1 75. (New) The method of claim 73, wherein the received feature price is responsive to a
2 customer specified availability date communicated to the seller and to the
3 manufacturer.

1 76. (New) A method for configuring a product using a computer network, the method
2 comprising:
3 receiving at a configuration engine a set of constraints defining a first set of valid
4 configurations of a product, the product having at least a first selectable
5 feature and a second selectable feature, the set of constraints being
6 determined by a seller or a manufacturer;
7 receiving at the configuration engine a customer specified constraint, the
8 customer specified constraint being received from a customer and being
9 received using the computer network;
10 receiving at the configuration engine a selection of the first selectable feature, the
11 received selection being received from the customer and being received
12 using the computer network;
13 determining a second set of valid configurations of the product, the second set of
14 valid configurations being a subset of the first set of valid configurations
15 and being constrained by the customer specified constraint and the
16 received selection;

17 determining at least two possible configurations of the second selectable feature
18 that satisfy the second set of valid configurations of the product; and
19 providing to the customer the determined at least two configurations of the second
20 selectable feature, using the computer network.

1 77. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein the customer specified constraint includes an
2 availability date of the product.

1 78. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein the customer specified constraint includes a
2 price of the product or a feature price.

1 79. (New) The method of claim 76, further including determining a feature price using
2 the received selection and using the feature price to update a product price.

1 80. (New) The method of claim 76, further including determining a feature availability
2 date using the received selection, and using the feature availability date to
3 determine a product availability date.

1 81. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein determining at least two configurations of
2 the second selectable feature that satisfy the second set of valid configurations
3 includes identifying a third configuration of the second selectable feature that
4 would be an invalid configuration due to the customer specified constraint.

1 82. (New) The method of claim 76, further including receiving at the configuration
2 engine a feature availability date from a supply system of a manufacturer.

1 83. (New) A method for configuring a product having at least one configurable feature,
2 the method comprising:
3 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product, at a
4 configuration application of a seller of the product;
5 communicating the received selection from the configuration application to a
6 supplier system of a manufacturer;
7 receiving from the manufacturer an automated response to the communicated
8 received selection, the automated response including an availability date
9 of the selected feature or a price of the selected feature;
10 updating an in-process bill of materials using the automated response;
11 using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine an availability date of
12 the product and a price of the product based on the received selection; and
13 providing, to the customer, the determined first availability date of the product
14 and the determined price of the product.

1 84. (New) The method of claim 83, wherein communicating the received selection from
2 the configuration system to the supplier system includes communicating using the
3 Internet.